

Hidden Treasures in Church Recording

From Derek Forbes (leading the team of 'Church Recorders' at Bromley Parish Church).

Vaughan Whibley, the person responsible for researching 'library' items and details in the church and church records elsewhere, has contributed the following report:

Part of the fascination of being a Church Recorder is unearthing treasures that have lain hidden for a long time, and in some cases finding treasures that nobody knew existed. This proved to be the case in our current exploits while recording at St Peter and St Paul's, Bromley Parish Church.

I have been concentrating on recording Library related items which includes all books, documents and manuscripts relating to the church, which are stored at the church although most of the material was deposited originally with Kent County Archives and more recently stored in the Local Studies Department of Bromley Public Libraries.

One of the first treasures I came across, in a box in the Library, was the quill pen used by HRH Princess Elizabeth to sign the illuminated scroll on the laying of the foundation stone of the new Bromley Parish Church, 13th. October 1949.

Other items include:

- Workhouse lease for 1732
- Workhouse bills for 1739 with death notices for bodies found!
- Book of Common Prayer 1758
- Prayer Lessons to be read at morning and evening prayer 1764
- A Faculty request from a former Vicar requesting grave space for himself (in advance!)
- Removal of Vagabonds document 1790
- Bastardy Form No.9. 1798
- A collection of iokes, from the 1937 Coronation Gala Programme - including:
 - In life as in rugby tries count.
 - Define the first person - answer Adam.
 - When down in the mouth, think of Jonah, he came out all right.
 - Livingstone went to Africa to be a misery to the natives.

The final treasure unearthed (so far!) a beautiful Bible dedicated to the Queen - Queen Elizabeth 1 - published in 1595.

I am sure there are many more treasures to unearth, although we haven't yet found the five cannon balls that should be in the tower lobby!

Vaughan Whibley

